

Making Medicinal Oils

How to Make an Herbal Oil at Home:

- Fill a mason jar with fresh or dry herbs, finely chopped. Fill until jar is loosely packed, and leave about $\frac{1}{4}$ " at the top.
- Add desired oil, and fill to the top. Screw on lid. Place saucer underneath to catch any seepage. Label with plant, carrier oil, date, etc.
- For most plants, put jar in the sun or sunny window, and shake daily to encourage the extraction process and discourage rancidity or mold. A nice maximum temperature for maceration is 80 -100 degrees (temperature will decrease at night) for about 2 weeks. Check color and scent of pure oil for readiness.
- When oil is finished, strain out plant material with cheesecloth, and squeeze tightly. Let oil settle for several minutes, and carefully pour again into clean jar, leaving any remaining liquid or sediment in the bottom of the first container.
- Consider a cold-extraction (not exposed to heat) for light oils or delicate flowers. Follow same procedures above, but keep jar in a cool, dark place and let macerate for 4 weeks.

Alternative Quickie Methods (when you are in a pinch)

- Use method above to fill jar, and then let it sit in 100 degree heat for 2-3 days (use oven, yogurt maker, etc)
- Put chopped plants in double boiler, and pour oil over plant material until submerged in oil. Heat oil to 140 for 3-4 hours.

For Culinary Oils

- If you are using aromatic herbs (most culinary herbs are heavy in fragrance), fill the jar about $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ full with dry herb (depending on how strong you want the flavor to be).

Recommended oils for herbal infusions

(seek organic oils, cold or expeller pressed)

- **Olive** – very stable oil, high nutritive value, most frequently used for herbal infusions. It is “heavier” than most other oils, and takes longer to absorb into the skin.
- **Almond** – light, highly nutritive, minimal odor. Easily absorbed, emulsifies and softens the skin. Frequently added to skin care products. Good choice for cold-infused oils of delicate flowers. Use caution with exposure to heat.
- **Sesame** – warming, light, slightly drying, strong odor, natural sunscreen properties (blocks about 20% of UV rays). Often used for skin care. Use caution with exposure to heat.
- **Sunflower** – light oil, nutritive to the skin, often used in skin care for dried and damaged skin. Easily absorbed.
- **Grape Seed** – good for skin types that don’t absorb oil easily. Does not leave greasy feeling. Good for sun protection (high in resveratrol). Odor may be undesirable for some people.
- **Coconut** – cooling, anti-viral, nutritive, especially good for the hair. It blocks about 20 – 30% of UV rays. Because it melts above 76 degrees, it ‘s consistency is variable. It needs low heat (to be in liquid form) to infuse with herbs.

Avoid oils that are very light or need to be refrigerated (ex: flax oil) and any oils that are made with heat and/or solvents.